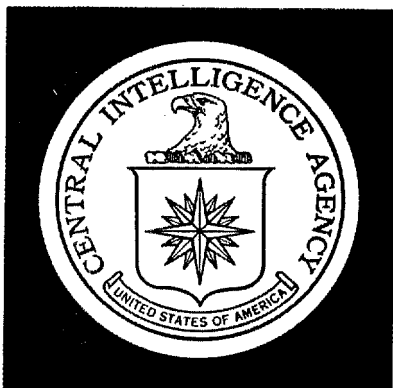


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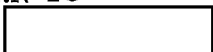


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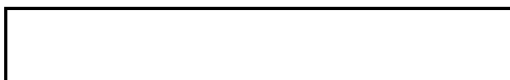


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*Vietnam:

North Vietnam: The Soviets seem to be mounting a concerted campaign to persuade the US to expand the projected holiday bombing pause of North Vietnam into an indefinite suspension of air attacks.

A Soviet diplomat in London told a US correspondent last week that he personally felt the Soviet Union could persuade Hanoi to enter negotiations if the US did not set a time limit on the pause. In addition, a Soviet Foreign Ministry official recently assured a Western ambassador that Hanoi would agree to talks within three weeks if the US would stop bombing.

Further Soviet approaches along this line are expected. Similar demarches were forthcoming from Moscow prior to the 1966 Christmas pause. There is no indication at this time that Moscow is acting at Hanoi's behest, although the North Vietnamese would doubtless welcome as lengthy a respite as possible.

South Vietnam: First reports on Operation CORONADO IX indicate that 235 Viet Cong were killed in a day-long battle on 4 December in the Mekong Delta some 66 miles southwest of Saigon.

The recent upsurge of enemy activity in the Mekong Delta may well be part of a country-wide offensive aimed at demonstrating Communist military capabilities and at proving to the populace that South Vietnamese authorities are unable to provide effective security. Along with the threat from main force units in the central highlands, northern III Corps and the Demilitarized Zone, these small-scale activities help to tie down and spread out Allied units.

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Cyprus: [Athens and Ankara have started to carry out the Cyprus agreements.]

[A ship left Greece yesterday as the first step in Athens' commitment to remove its troops. A Greek Foreign Ministry official said that he understood that the ship would load a battalion of Greek troops on 8 December. The Turkish ambassador in Athens has been so informed.]

[Turkish Foreign Minister Caglayangil has indicated that Ankara's first act would be to pull back the troops in Thrace.]

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Cypriot President Makarios' belated and qualified response to U Thant's appeal suggests that the difficult negotiations over the future of Cyprus have just begun. Makarios probably will try to drive a hard bargain. He is likely to insist on eventual total demilitarization of the island, seek guarantees--probably from the UN--against military intervention, and demand respect for Cypriot "sovereignty" in connection with any expanded role for the UN peace force in the pacification of the island.

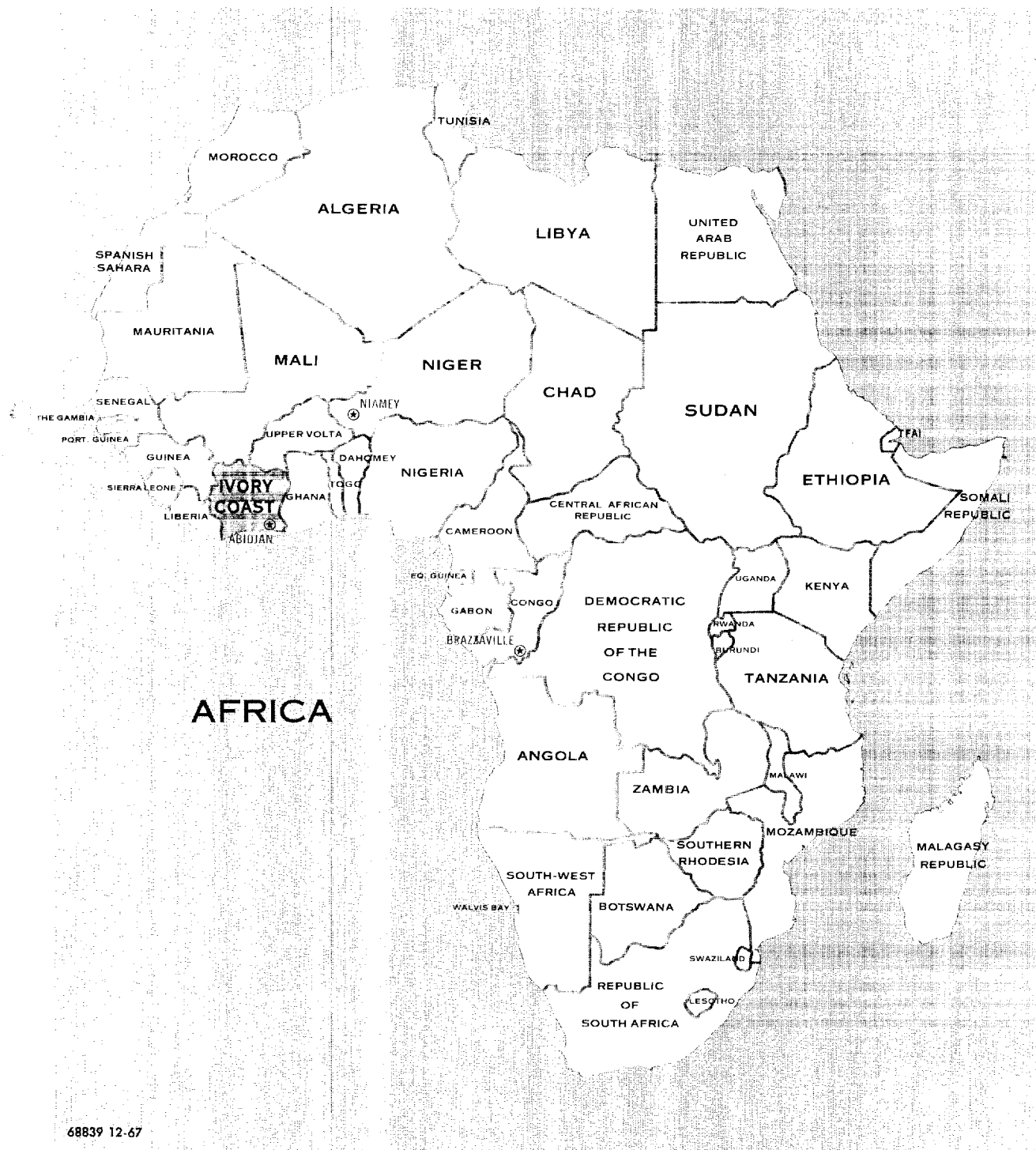
Makarios is also likely to try to use the UN force to eliminate the Turkish Cypriot enclaves which have developed since December 1963. This will do little to allay the deep distrust of his motives already evident in the Turkish Cypriot community and in Ankara.

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Ivory Coast: /President Houphouet-Boigny is moving cautiously toward expanded relations, possibly including eventual diplomatic ties, with white-ruled southern Africa. /

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Like his French mentors, whose opinions are carefully considered in Abidjan, Houphouet has long felt that unbending hostility toward South Africa, Rhodesia, and Portugal is an exercise in futility.

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Few African countries can be expected to follow Houphouet's lead immediately, and a number of them, including some moderate states, will probably go on record as opposing the move. Condemnations can be expected from the leaders of such radical states as Guinea, Congo (Brazzaville), Tanzania and Algeria. They may attempt to make an issue of the proposal during the Organization of African Unity meeting next February.

(continued)

Houphouet himself probably intends to go slowly
in working out the details with the white governments.

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Czechoslovakia: [Some changes in the leadership may be in prospect.]

[A party central committee plenum is scheduled to meet shortly to discuss persistent difficulties. Rumors of forthcoming changes in the party and government are widespread in Prague. There are even suggestions that party boss Novotny may step aside.]

[The hierarchy is reportedly split and has so far been unable to deal effectively with such problems as the poor results so far from the economic reforms, dissidence within the intellectual community, the growing disaffection of Czechoslovak youth, and maintaining party cohesion.]

[It is unlikely that Novotny will be ousted at the plenum. His position, however, has already been weakened. He may offer the plenum several "scapegoats," and thus try to buy time to work out new policies which would be tolerable to the different factions.]

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Rumania: Party chief Ceausescu will use the national party conference opening in Bucharest tomorrow to consolidate his position. At his insistence party statutes may be changed to permit individuals to hold both party and state positions simultaneously. The conference will also approve directives for both economic reform and a realignment of territorial administrations. These steps will give Ceausescu the opportunity to place additional hand-picked personnel in key positions in party and state bodies affected by the directives.

Canada-NATO: Ottawa plans to reduce its six air squadrons in Europe to four and to cut the number of aircraft there by almost 20 percent over the next few years. The Canadians also plan to eliminate one of the two NATO-committed army strategic reserve brigades in Canada and to reorganize their 6,500-man army force in Europe, which may mean that it will be cut. The plans are part of a campaign to trim government spending and probably are the maximum reductions Ottawa thinks it can make and still maintain its role in the alliance.

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